

The contract for the USS PICKING (DD 685) was awarded to the Bethlehem Steel Company, Inc., Staten Island, New York, on June 14, 1942 and five months later, on the 24th of November 1942, her keel was laid in the company's Mariner's Harbor (Staten Island) yard.

The PICKING, a 2,050 ton destroyer of the Fletcher Class of 1941-42, was named in memory of Captain Sherwood Picking, USN who died in a plane crash in Scotland enroute to London on September 1, 1941. When the destroyer was launched, June 1, 1943, Mrs. Sherwood Picking, wife of the late Captain Picking, sponsored the ship.

Captain Sherwood Picking, born at Baltimore, Maryland, February 21, 1890, was graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in the Class of 1911 and became Captain, July 1, 1939. During World War I he was cited for distinguished and heroic action as commanding officer of a submarine which operated in waters infested with enemy vessels and mines.

In June 1936, Captain Picking was stationed at Harvard University in connection with the Naval Reserve Officers' training Corps Unit. Later he was placed in command of Submarine Squadron Three, with additional duty commanding the Submarine Base at Coco Solo, Canal Zone. He returned to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations in April 1941, after which he was assigned to temporary duty at London, England.

The USS PICKING was commissioned at the Brooklyn Navy Yard in September 1943, at which time Commander R.S. Lamb, USN assumed command.

After a six week shakedown in the Bermuda area of the British West Indies and a post-shakedown overhaul, the PICKING proceeded to the Canal Zone. Upon arrival at Balboa, C.Z., on December 9th, she reported to the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, for duty and shortly thereafter was assigned to the North Pacific Fleet.

The PICKING then sailed for Dutch Harbor in the Aleutian Islands and upon arrival, December 28, 1943, reported to Commander North Pacific Fleet and Commander Destroyer Squadron 49. Captain H.F. Gearing, USN, Commander DesRon 49, shifted his pennant aboard the U.S.S. PICKING on January 2, 1944.

For the next seven months the PICKING operated with the NINTH Fleet in the Aleutian area and during this time five offensive operations were carried out against enemy shipping and installations in the Japanese-held Kurile Islands.

The first of these attacks occurred on February 4, 1944, when the destroyers and cruisers of the NINTH Fleet bombarded the Karabusaki area on Paramushiru. This was the first naval bombardment of Japanese home territory of World War II. Though there was some return fire from enemy batteries, none of the ships were hit and all returned to port unharmed except from damage caused by heavy North Pacific Seas.

On the 3rd and 4th of March, this force again steamed for the Kuriles. The cruiser-destroyer force entered the Sea of Okhotsk in search for an enemy convoy known to be in the vicinity but, unfortunately, no enemy shipping was discovered. The force twice approached the southern shores of Paramushiru on March 4th but due to strong winds and high seas no bombardment could be carried out and the task force returned to its base.

On the 13th of June, the PICKING, with destroyers and cruisers of the NINTH Fleet, bombarded Matsuwa. Since dense fog prevented sighting of the island, the approach to the target and subsequent bombardment were carried out entirely by radar.

This task force returned to the Karabusaki area of Paramushiru on June 26, 1944, and bombarded the airfield and installations there. A number of surface radar contacts were taken under fire by the PICKING during the approach and retirement from the target area but the extent of damage could not be ascertained due to the heavy fog. These contacts were presumed to be fishing vessels.

On the 27th and 28th of July the destroyers of Squadron 49 conducted a sweep down the Kamchatka Peninsula into the waters off Paramushiru in an effort to clear the area of enemy picket boats believed to be there but, again, no enemy shipping was encountered.

On the 1st of August, the force sailed from Attu, Aleutian Islands, for a third bombardment of Paramushiru. However, during the approach, the task force was twice detected by enemy planes and since surprise was considered essential to the success of the mission, the bombardment was abandoned.

During the intervals between these operations, the PICKING was employed in routine assignments of escort duty, antisubmarine sweeps, searching for pilots of friendly planes forced down at sea, and training exercises; the ship being based at Adak and Attu during the entire period. A considerable portion of the time in port was spent repairing damage to the ship caused by the foul weather of the Aleutians. It was a testimony to the excellence of Navy material that the ship was able to take the constant weather battering without suffering more damage than she did, for she was never prevented from fully carrying out any of her assignments.

The PICKING left the Aleutian area for San Francisco, California, on August 8, 1944 and upon arrival spent a ten day availability period for upkeep.

During this period, Lieutenant Commander B.J. SEMMES, JR, USN, relieved Commander R.S. LAMB, USN, as Commanding Officer; and Captain E.R. McLEAN, USN, relieved Captain H.F. Gearing, USN, as Commander, Destroyer Squadron 49.

The PICKING then left the West Coast and sailed for Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, where she arrived on August 31, 1944, and reported to the Commander, THIRD Fleet for duty. After a period of training and rehearsal exercises in Hawaiian waters, the destroyer departed for Manus Admiralty Islands, on September 15th as one of the escort vessels for several divisions of attack transports. The ships reached Seeadler Harbor, Manus, on October 3rd after an uneventful voyage.

For the next six months the PICKING was temporarily assigned to the SEVENTH Fleet and during this time, participated in the Philippine Campaign operations.

With destination the Philippine area, the PICKING left Manus on October 14th as an escort vessel for the Southern Attack Force. The attack force entered Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, on the 20th after an uneventful voyage and, during the next four days, the DD 685 functioned as part of the antiaircraft and anti-submarine screen for transports and landing craft during the assault on the southern beaches. At sunset on the 20th, three high-flying Japanese "Sally's" were taken under fire by the PICKING's 5 inch and automatic weapons with unobserved results. Though other planes were seen during the succeeding four days, none of them came within effective gun range.

On the afternoon of October 24 1944, the PICKING weighed anchor from Leyte Gulf as part of the escort for the unloaded transports which were retiring to Hollandia, New Guinea. That night the force was approached by two unidentified planes which the PICKING took under fire. One of the planes was destroyed and the other retired without attacking.

On the morning of the 25th, word was received of an attack by heavy enemy surface units upon one of the Allied CVE (Escort aircraft carrier) groups off Samar Island, P.I. The PICKING with two other destroyers (the SPROSTON and HALE) was detached from the transport screen to proceed back to Leyte Gulf and attack any enemy vessel encountered enroute.

This force of three destroyers steamed toward Leyte Gulf at high speed and shortly after noon were ordered to join the screen of the CVE group which had been under heavy enemy air attack and had suffered damage to its carriers and escort vessels. While steaming with this force there were a number of sporadic enemy air raids but none of them broke through the combat air patrol.

At 8 PM that night contact was made with a second group of CVE's and it was found this group had lost its escort vessels and two CVE's in the battle of Samar Island. the PICKING, HALE, and SPROSTON were detached to join them and to investigate a "skunk" which was trailing the group. This "skunk" eventually proved to be an enemy submarine which submerged as the destroyers approached. The SPROSTON established sound contact and then attacked with depth charges after which the PICKING and HALE closed to attack but were unable to regain the contact. At this point, two unidentified planes approached and were taken under fire by the two latter destroyers. One Japanese plane was shot down and the other, not seeking to join battle, retired. The SPROSTON was then left to hold the submarine down during the remainder of the night and the HALE and PICKING proceeded to take up screening position with the second CVE group.

On the 26th of October 1944, the PICKING was detached to join the escort of the MOUNT OLYMPUS and AURIGA, which were leaving Leyte Gulf for Manus. From this date until December 27th, the destroyer was engaged in routine escort duties or tasks in connection with ship's replenishment and maintenance.

The DD-685 escorted transports loaded with reenforcements back into Leyte Gulf on November 20th and, while unloading operations were proceeding, the force was attacked by four "suicide" Japanese fighter planes, two of these were taken under fire by the ship's batteries and the PICKING was credited with an "assist" in splashing one of these planes. This was the only action of importance which occurred during this period.

On December 2, 1944, the PICKING departed from Manila for Lingayen Gulf, Luzon, as an escort unit for the landing craft and control groups of Task Force 79. The objective was reached on January 9 1945 without any incidents of note as far as the "685" was concerned. Enemy planes were frequently reported in the area during the passage through the Philippines, but only one attack was made on the task group. None of the ships were damaged in this attack but one enemy fighter-bomber was shot down by the landing craft.

During the assault on the beaches at Lingayen Gulf on January 9th, the PICKING functioned as part of the antisubmarine and antiaircraft screen for the transports and landing craft. Several enemy aircraft were taken under fire by the PICKING but no observed damage was done to the enemy planes. On the evening of the 9th, the PICKING joined the screen for the unloaded transports and the group retired to Leyte Gulf without incident.

The ship then returned to Luzon as one of the escort vessels for the transport echelon which effected the landings on the San Antonio - San Felipe beaches on the 29th of January. The landings were made without incident, as the beachheads proved to have been occupied by friendly guerrilla forces.

For the next four days the ship operated in the antisubmarine and antiaircraft screen about the transports and landing craft while they unloaded. No definite enemy counter-action occurred, though unidentified aircraft occasionally approached the area.

From the 2nd to the 13th of February, the ship operated in and about Subic Bay, Philippine Islands.

On the 13th of February, the PICKING and the USS YOUNG gave close fire support to minesweepers clearing known minefields from the waters around Mariveles Bay and Corregidor. As the enemy did not fire at the minesweeping vessels, the PICKING bombarded targets of opportunity on Southern Corregidor and around the entrance to Mariveles Bay. The PICKING fired the first shell of the war, from a U.S. Navy vessel, into Corregidor.

On the night of February 14-15, the DD-685 screened assault shipping from Subic Bay to Mariveles Bay. The destroyer then carried out scheduled bombardment of the east side of the Bay, immediately prior to the landings, which were effected without difficulty about 9AM. Throughout the remainder of the day the ship was engaged in screening operations.

The following morning (February 16 1945) the PICKING carried out a scheduled bombardment and close support of the beachhead in the San Jose area of Corregidor. After the landing of the U.S. troops, targets of opportunity were taken under fire, at least one enemy battery, firing at the landing craft was silenced by direct hits from the PICKING's 5-inch guns, and mortar fire from the beaches was also neutralized.

Late in the afternoon of the 16th, the ship was relieved of her fire support duties and headed back to Leyte, where the period from February 18th to March 1st was spent in replenishing supplies and in maintenance, as well as participating in exercises in preparation for the forthcoming Okinawa operation.

As one of the screening and support ships for the assault force, on March 21st the PICKING got underway from Leyte Gulf for Kerama Retto, Okinawa Gunto. The voyage was uneventful, though the task force was spotted by a low - flying "Judy" on March 25th.

No attack developed from the "Judy" and the task force arrived without incident off Kerama Retto before dawn on the 26th of March. As the ships began to deploy for the assault, the PICKING took an assigned screening station. By 8AM landing operations were underway. There were intermittent air raids during the day in which several of the ships were hit by suicide planes. Just before sunset, the transports regrouped for night retirement from the islands with the PICKING operating with the screening vessels.

For the next four days the PICKING continued her screening operations off Kerama Retto during the daytime; and at night escorted the transports to their retirement area at sea. There were intermittent air raids but none of significance.

A derelict was reported near Keise Shima, off southwestern Okinawa on March 31st, and the PICKING was ordered to investigate and destroy it. The wrecked vessel was found to be a damaged enemy lugger and attempts at destruction - with 5-inch and 40 millimeter shell fire, and by depth charging proved ineffective. The ship then stood by to patrol this navigational hazard which lay in the path of the Okinawa Assault Force, due to arrive late that night.

On April 1, 1945 the PICKING was assigned for duty in Task Force 54, the fire support and covering force for the Okinawa operation. She remained with this force for the next 68 days, operating principally as fire support ship for land operations and occasionally as a screening vessel for the cruisers and battleships of the task force; also, she sometimes acted as "fly catcher" to prevent Japanese small craft activity, particularly that of suicide boats. During this period of constant day and night bombardment, the PICKING fired over 15,000 rounds of 5-inch ammunition into Japanese positions on southern Okinawa, destroying a number of enemy artillery pieces, dumps, vehicles, pill boxes; sealing numerous caves; and killing an unknown number of enemy troops. The ship was almost constantly on firing stations except for those periods when it was necessary to replenish fuel and ammunition or when she was assigned screening duties. During the day, the firing was directed by air and land spotters. At night, illumination and harassing fire was conducted by sector fire, and when necessary, directed by land spotters.

Hardly a day passed without at least one enemy air raid; usually there were several. During daylight most of the enemy planes were intercepted and destroyed before reaching the area of concentrated shipping around southern Okinawa, but at night the Japanese were able to reach the area almost at will. While the Japanese activities were a nuisance, they did very little affective damage.

On the 3rd of April, shortly after midnight, while screening battleships and cruisers of Task Force 54 in their night retirement west of Okinawa, the PICKING was attacked by a low flying "Betty" which dropped a torpedo, after passing close astern of the destroyer, the "tin fish" exploded harmlessly.

The PICKING was fired on by a shore battery, April 5th, which was located on Southern Okinawa. The principal target for the enemy battery, however, proved to be the USS NEVADA which was hit several times. Together with the other fire support ships, the PICKING conducted counter-battery fire which speedily eliminated the enemy gun position.

The following afternoon, while proceeding to join the heavy units of Task Force 54 for the night retirement sortie, the PICKING was attacked by four "Tony" type Japanese planes approaching low over the water. Two of these were driven off by gun fire but the other two persisted in their attack. The first of these exploded from 40 milimeter hits and crashed into the water 200 yards off the port quarter. Less than 60 seconds later the second was hit by a 5-inch burst and splashed 500 yards off the port beam.

In the late afternoon of April 7 1945, off western Okinawa, the PICKING joined a battle force of battleships, cruisers, and destroyers which were forming up to meet a Japanese task force, centered around the YAMATO, and was reported heading in the direction of Okinawa. Just before sunset, the PICKING opened fire on a "Zeke" diving out of the overcast some three miles off the starboard bow. The Japanese plane, however was not hit and made a suicide crash into the USS MARYLAND. Late that night, the PICKING learned that the Japanese surface force threat had been disposed of by the planes of Task Force 58.

On the night of April 9th, while retiring with other ships of Task Force 54, the DD-685 shot down an enemy aircraft believed to have been a "Betty" which approached the formation.

While screening the USS ARKANSAS in the Nakagusuku Wan, during the afternoon of April 17, the destroyer picked up a radioman from the USS BUNKER HILL, who had parachuted when his plane was forced to make a water landing after engine trouble.

Shortly after midnight of May 2nd, while conducting night harassing and illumination fire northwest of Naha, shells began to splash close aboard the destroyer. The ship got underway immediately and conducted counter-battery fire. The enemy battery, believed to be near Naha, ceased fire very shortly thereafter.

Shortly after dawn on May 18th, the PICKING went to the assistance of the USS LONGSHAW, a destroyer which had gone aground on a shoal just off Naha Airfield on Southern Okinawa. After making an attempt to tow, the cable parted, so the PICKING stood by to render assistance while the ARIKARA (AT 98) attempted towing. At 11AM the LONGSHAW reported herself under fire from enemy shore batteries and PICKING immediately turned her guns on the Japanese emplacements. The LONGSHAW was hit amidships and then, again, forward. There followed a violent explosion which destroyed the forward part of the ship as far back as the mast.

This blast was followed by a raging fire which appeared for a time to engulf the entire ship but was later seen to center about the demolished forward section. Meanwhile the shore battery shifted its attention to the PICKING. Several shells hit fairly close aboard but, by this time, all fire support ships in the vicinity were concentrating their fire on the enemy gun position and quickly silenced it.

The PICKING immediately put a boat in the water to aid in the rescue of LONGSHAW survivors, many of whom could be seen amidst the floating debris and burning oil. Some 30 LONGSHAW men were picked up and taken to an LCI which was standing close in for rescue work. While the boat was alongside effecting the transfer, the LCI was also hit by enemy shell fire from the shore and many of the survivors jumped back into the water, necessitating their re-rescue.

By afternoon it was apparent that the LONGSHAW was beyond salvage and the PICKING was ordered to destroy her by torpedo fire. This proved difficult because of the shallow waters and strong current and only two hits were gained out of five torpedoes fired. One of the "hits" failed to explode and the other destroyed the after portion of the ship. What remained of the stricken vessel was destroyed by 5-inch gunfire from the USS EDWARDS and PICKING.

On June 7 1945, the PICKING was relieved of fire support duties since, due to so much firing, her 5-inch guns were so eroded that effective pin point fire was no longer possible. On the following day the destroyer took a station off southern Kume Shima as radar picket. The following few days were uneventful since no enemy raids of more than one plane were made in the sector and on the 12th of June all the ships were called in because of an approaching typhoon. The PICKING remained anchored at Hagushi until the 16th, when she proceeded to another radar picket station northwest of Ie Shima. After four quiet days with little or no enemy activity, the ship proceeded back to the Hagushi Anchorage. She remained in this vicinity until the 23rd of June when she departed for Saipan as convoy escort.

On June 25, 1945, the DD-685 received orders to proceed to the United States for overhaul. The cessation of World War II hostilities occurred while she was proceeding to the United States in friendly waters.

The USS PICKING (DD 685) earned five (5) battle stars on the Asiatic-Pacific Area Service Ribbon for participating in the following operations:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 Star/Kurile Islands Operation | 1 Star/Luzon Operation |
| Masashi-Wan-Kurabu-Zaki - 4 FEB 1944 | Lingayen Gulf Landing |
| Matsuwa - 13 June 1944 | 4 - 18 JAN 1945 |
| Kurabu-Zaki - 26 June 1944 | |
| 1 Star/Leyte Operation | 1 Star/Manila Bay-Bicol Operations |
| Leyte Landings 10 Oct - 29 Nov 1944 | Mariñel-Corregidor |
| | 14-28 FEB 1945 |
| | 1 Star/Okinawa Gunto Operation |
| | Assault and Occupation of Okinawa |
| | Gunto 24 March - 30 June 1945 |

In July 1949 while the PICKING was undergoing overhaul she was ordered to report to the Pacific Reserve Group, Long Beach, California where she was decommissioned.

The USS PICKING (DD 685) was recommissioned at 1620, 26 January 1951 by Capt. J.J. CURLEY, JR. USN, Commander Long Beach Group Pacific Reserve Fleet. Cdr. Alfred C. EDWARDS assumed command. The PICKING departed from Long Beach on 15 April 1951 enroute to her new home port, Newport R.I. The next 18 months saw operations with Destroyer Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet as Flagship for COMDESRON 24, Capt. C.H. LYMAN III. Operations included overhaul in the Boston Naval Shipyard, refresher training at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, duty with ComAntiSubLant and a six week cold weather cruise off Labrador. During this time Cdr. EDWARDS was relieved by Cdr. T.R. WARREN as Commanding Officer.

In November 1952, the ship suffered a collision with her sister ship, U.S.S. STEPHEN POTTER (DD 538). Thereafter the PICKING continued operations with the Atlantic Fleet until 1 April 1953 when she left for Korea on a round-the-world cruise. Prior to departure Cdr. T.R. WARREN was relieved by Capt. C.W. MOSES as ComDesRon 24. In Korea, the ship served with task Force 77 and Task Force 81, having conducted shore bombardment operations with the latter. During these operations Capt. J. MC GINNIS relieved Capt. C.W. MOSES as ComDesRon 24. Korea duty was concluded by a search for a downed Navy plane. The only survivor, Capt. ROTHE, USN was recovered and brought safely back to land. Prior to departure from Korea, Capt. H. FARROW relieved Capt. J. MC GINNIS as ComDesRon 24. In August 1953 the ship headed back for the United States via Hong Kong, Singapore, Ceylon, the Suez Canal, Ismir, Naples, Cannes, Gibraltar and Argentina.

Normal Atlantic Fleet peacetime operations and overhauls continued until 3 January 1955, when the PICKING again headed for Europe. The ship visited Mediterranean and Northern European ports and operated out of Londonderry, Ireland for a period of 3 weeks during a period of indoctrination training in British convoy escort techniques. It was there that Capt. L. T. STONE relieved Capt. H. FARROW as ComDesRon 24.

Upon return to the U.S. the ship resumed operations out of Newport, R.I. and on 16 Nov. 1955, Cdr. T.W. WILLIAMSON, relieved Cdr. M.P. SMITH as Commanding Officer. Shortly thereafter, the ship received word she was to be transferred to the Pacific Fleet. Since he did not wish to return to the Pacific, Cdr. WILLIAMSON requested another ship and he was relieved by Cdr. J.J. REIDY, Jr. on March 1956 during yard overhaul in Philadelphia Navy Shipyard. On 9 March 1956, Capt. E.K. WAKEFIELD relieved Capt. L.T. STONE as ComDesRon 24. On 29 March 1956, the PICKING in company with DesDiv 241 again headed for the Pacific and Long Beach, California to operate in PacFleet under ComCruDesPac. Upon joining the Pacific Fleet, DesRon 24 became DesRon 23. In a brief but colorful ceremony in Gatun Lake, Panama, the pennant of DesRon 23, the famed Little Beaver Squadron was run up and the PICKING with the other ships in the division proceeded to the Pacific.

After underway training in May, PICKING went back to the Far East on 5 June 1956 and served with the SEVENTH FLEET until November. While with SEVENTH Fleet, PICKING participated in several Task Force operations and was a part of the Taiwan patrol. During this stay she visited ports in Japan, Philippines, Hong Kong and Taiwan. 18 November 1956 she returned to her home port in Long Beach

On August 1, 1957 RADM PHILLIPS presented the battle efficiency "E" to Capt. REIDY, officers and men of the PICKING for a job well done during the fiscal year 1957. The Engineering "E" and antisubmarine warfare "E" were also won by the PICKING for 1957.

August 1957 saw the flagship of DESRON 23 return for a second tour in the Western Pacific Area. That year she visited many interesting countries and ports including New Zealand, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the Philippines.

In January 1958, the PICKING entered the Naval Shipyard at Long Beach for a yard overhaul. On July 8 1958, CDR A. DOUGALL relieved CDR. J.J. REIDY, Jr. as Commanding Officer of the PICKING

During the winter of 1958-1959 the PICKING again visited the Western Pacific for an equally good cruise. Operations were primarily ASW in a HUK group with the USS YORKTOWN (CVS-10). The humanitarian accomplishment was the delivering of emergency supplies to the Japanese town of Koniya at Amami O'Shima which had been destroyed by fire.

While the division was in WestPac that winter a new "HULL" class destroyer came to the West Coast to join the division. PICKING returned to Long Beach in March 1959 and the flag shifted to the USS EDSON (DD-946) in June of the same year. It was the first time PICKING had not carried the flag since she was recommissioned in 1951. The PICKING was awarded a second hash-mark for her engineering "E". On the 4th of July the PICKING was anchored off Monterey, California to participate in the Commodore Sloat Celebration. Besides receiving many friendly visitors the ship provided a marching unit for the ceremonies and returned the 13 gun salute fired by the Monterey Presidio.

In August 1959 PICKING steamed North to join the Seafair parade prior to the Gold Cup Races. After Seafair, PICKING participated in SLAMEX 1-60, a joint ASW exercise conducted 200 miles off the coast of Washington Oregon, and Northern California with 8 U.S. destroyers, the YORKTOWN (CVS-10) plus three new St. Laurent Class Canadian Destroyers, HMCS FRAISER (DDE-233), HMCS MARGAREE (DDE-230), and HMCS SKEENA (DDE-207).

The PICKING along with DESDIV 231 less USS PRESTON (DD-795) plus USS THOMAS (DDR-833) deployed to WestPac on 5 January 1960 for a 4 month tour. PICKING returned to Long Beach in June 1960 and entered Long Beach Naval Shipyard for overhaul in July 1960.

During the yard period CDR J. M. MASON relieved CDR A. DOUGALL as Commanding Officer. After an extensive overhaul, PICKING commenced refresher training in San Diego and in January 1961 was again an active and participating unit of the Destroyer Force, Pacific Fleet

In June 1961, PICKING cruised north to participate in the annual Rose festival at Portland, Oregon, returning to the Long Beach area for additional training exercises. On 10 August 1961 Rear Admiral D. L. KAUFFMAN, USN, COMDESFLOT THREE presented PICKING with the Battle Efficiency "E" Award for outstanding performance in combat readiness competition. At this same time, Admiral KAUFFMAN in a colorful ceremony completed painting on a large gold "E" on the after stack and awarded the Engineering Department their fifth consecutive Engineering Excellence Award, a record never before equalled by any ship in the U. S. Navy.

On 11 August PICKING departed Long Beach with her division for employment in WESTPAC. PICKING operated with the carriers USS RANGER (CVA 61) and USS TICONDEROGA (CVA 14) and served a month on the "Taiwan Patrol" in the Formosa Straits. During the cruise PICKING visited Honolulu Hawaii, Yokosuka Japan, Sasebo Japan, Subic Bay Phillippines, Kaohsiung, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, B. C. C. before returning to her home port of Long Beach on 10 February 1962 for a welcome and deserved leave and upkeep period.

During April 1962 PICKING received the distinction of being one of the elite few to pass her inspection by the Board of Inspection and Survey. The following months were filled with local operations and providing services for; Destroyer Development Group, Pacific; Naval Electronics Laboratory; SUBFLOTONE; Fleet Sonar School, and various carriers conducting flight operations.

In August of 1962, CDR E. C. CONNELLEY releived CDR J. M. MASON as commanding officer. Also during August of 1962, the PICKING, along with the BRUSH (DD 745) attended the San Pedro, California, "Fisherman's Fiesta". Several thousand visitors probed her decks from top to bottom. Many compliments were received toward the Navy in general and especially for PICKING's hospitality.

October found the PICKING steaming North to San Francisco, California where she spent several days in training and providing rest and relaxation for a weary crew. While there, the Cuban crisis of 1962 broke, and the PICKING spent several anxious days along with four other DD's providing protection for the RANGER (CVA 61).

The latter part of November 1962 saw the PICKING pass through the gates of the Long Beach Naval Shipyard once again for a much needed three month overhaul.

STATISTICS

OVERALL LENGTH	376 FEET
BEAM	40 FEET
DISPLACEMENT	2,050 TONS
SPEED	35 KNOTS
ACCOMMODATIONS	24 OFFICERS, 305 ENLISTED MEN

COMMANDING OFFICERS OF THE USS PICKENS (DD 685)

September 21 1943 - August 1944	CDR R. S. LAMB, USN
August 1944 - June 1945	LCDR B. J. SEMMES, USN
June 1945 - January 26 1951	PACIFIC RESERVE FLEET
January 26 1951 - (about) Sept 1952	CDR ALFRED C. EDWARDS, USN
September 1952 - March 1953	CDR T. R. WARREN, USN
March 1953 - November 16 1955	CDR M. P. SMITH, USN
November 16 1955 - March 1956	CDR T. W. WILLIAMSON, USN
March 1956 - July 8 1958	CDR J. J. REIDY JR., USN
July 8 1958 - August 15 1960	CDR A. DOUGALL, USN
August 15 1960 - August 1962	CDR J. M. MASON, USN
August 1962 - Present	CDR E. C. CONNELLEY, USN

Cinemascope File
A7-1(P)


Serial 083905

6 APR 1959

Edna Heman
USNR UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
AND PACIFIC OCEAN AREAS
HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

15 SEP 1945

From: Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.
To: Secretary of the Navy. 
Subject: News Material Prepared by Public Information Officer Attached to the USS PICKING (DD-685) - Forwarding of.
Enclosure: (A) War record of USS PICKING (DD-685) for period between 21 September 1943 and 25 June 1945.

1. Enclosure (A) is forwarded herewith for delivery to the Office of Public Information.

Copy to:
CO, USS PICKING

Walter S. Frederick

WALTER S. FREDERICK,
By Direction



Pub. Inf. Officer
SEP 20 1945
DD-685
13721

FILMED

158169

A7-1(P)


Serial 028003

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
AND PACIFIC OCEAN AREAS
HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

15 SEP 1945

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

From: Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.
To: Secretary of the Navy.  VIA AIR MAIL
Subject: News Material Prepared by Public Information Officer Attached to the USS PICKING (DD-685) - Forwarding of.

Enclosure: (A) War record of USS PICKING (DD-685) for period between 21 September 1943 and 25 June 1945.

1. Enclosure (A) is forwarded herewith for delivery to the Office of Public Information.

WALTER S. FREDERICK,
By Direction

Copy to:
CO, USS PICKING

Pub. Info. Officer
SEP 1945
301322 (10) AF-1/20.685
100. No. _____
447 No. 21 2
100. No. _____

U.S.S. PICKING (DD685)

c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, Calif.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WAR RECORD FOR PERIOD 21 SEPTEMBER 1943 to 25 JUNE 1945

The PICKING was commissioned on 21 September, 1943 at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, and Commander R.S. LAMB, USN assumed command. After a six week shakedown in the Bermuda area and a post-shakedown overhaul, the ship proceeded to the Canal Zone. On arrival at Balboa, 9 December, the ship reported to the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, for duty and, shortly thereafter, was assigned to duty with the North Pacific Fleet.

On arriving in Dutch Harbor on 28 December, the PICKING reported to the Commander North Pacific Fleet and to Commander Destroyer Squadron FORTY-NINE for duty. Captain H. F. GEARING, USN, who at that time was ComDesRon 49, shifted his pennant aboard this ship on 2 January 1944, and there it has remained for the period covered in this report.

For the next seven months the PICKING operated with the NINTH Fleet in the Aleutian Area. During this time five offensive operations were carried out against enemy shipping and installations in the Kuriles.

The first of these attacks occurred on 4 February, 1944, when the destroyers and cruisers of the NINTH Fleet bombarded the KARABUSAKI area on PARAMUSHIRU. This was the first naval bombardment of Japanese home territory of the present war. Though there was some return fire from enemy batteries, none of our ships were hit and all returned to port unharmed, except for moderate to severe weather damage.

On the third and fourth of March this force returned to the KURILES. The Sea of Okhotsk was entered in search for an enemy convoy known to be in the vicinity. Unfortunately, no enemy shipping was discovered. On the fourth of March the southern shores of PARAMUSHIRU were twice approached, but due to strong winds and high seas no bombardment could be carried out. The task force, therefore, returned to base.

On 13 June, MATSUWA was bombarded by the destroyers and cruisers of the NINTH Fleet. The approach to the target and the bombardment were carried out entirely by radar as dense fog prevented sighting of the island.

This task force returned to the KARABUSAKI area of PARAMUSHIRU on 26 June, and bombarded the airfield and installations there. A number of surface radar contacts were taken under fire by this ship during the approach and retirement from the target area. The extent of damage done to these contacts, which were presumably fishing vessels, could not be ascertained due to the dense fog which prevented visual sighting.

On 27 and 28 July the destroyers of Squadron FORTY-NINE conducted a sweep down the KAMCHATKA PENINSULA into the waters off PARAMUSHIRU in an effort to clear the area of enemy picket boats thought to be present. No enemy shipping was encountered.

U.S.S. PICKING (DD685)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, Calif.

WAR RECORD FOR PERIOD 21 SEPTEMBER 1943 TO 25 JUNE 1945

The cruisers and destroyers of the NINTH Fleet set out from ATTU, on 1 August, for a third bombardment of PARAMUSHIRU. During the approach, the task force was twice detected by enemy planes. Since surprise was considered essential to the success of the mission, the bombardment was abandoned and the task force returned to base.

In the interval between these operations, the PICKING was employed in routine assignments, i.e.: Escort duties, anti-submarine sweeps, searches for the pilots of friendly planes forced down at sea, and training exercises. The ship based at ADAK and ATTU during the entire period. A considerable portion of the time in port was spent repairing damage to the ship caused by the weather, which, in the Aleutians, has a justly foul reputation. Indeed it was a testimony to the excellence of Navy material that the ship was able to take the constant weather battering without suffering more damage than she did. The ship was never prevented from fully carrying out any of her assignments, thanks to the perseverance and ability of the crew in repairing whatever damage occurred.

On 8 August, 1944, the PICKING left the Aleutian area for San Francisco. There she had ten days availability for upkeep. During this period, Lieutenant Commander B. J. SEMMES, Jr., USN, relieved Commander R. S. LAMB as Commanding Officer and Captain E. R. MC LEAN, USN, relieved Captain H. F. GEARING as Commander, Destroyer Squadron FORTY-NINE.

The ship reported to the Commander, THIRD Fleet on arriving at PEARL HARBOR on 31 August. After a period of training and rehearsal exercises, the PICKING departed for MANUS on 15 September as one of the escort vessels for several divisions of attack transports. SEEDLER HARBOR was reached on 3 October, after an uneventful voyage.

For the next six months the PICKING was assigned temporarily to the SEVENTH Fleet, and during this time participated in the Philippine Campaign operations.

On 14 October the ship left MANUS as part of the escort for the Southern Attack Force. After an uneventful voyage, LEYTE GULF was entered on the morning of 20 October. During the next four days, the PICKING functioned as part of the anti-aircraft and anti-submarine screen about the transports and landing craft during the assault on the southern beaches. At sunset on the twentieth, three high-flying Sallys were taken under fire by the five inch and automatic weapons, with unobserved results. Though other enemy planes were seen, during the succeeding four days, none of them came within effective gun range.

On the afternoon of 24 October the PICKING departed LEYTE GULF as part of the escort for unloaded transports retiring to HOLLANDIA. That night this force was approached by two unidentified planes which were

U.S.S. PICKING (DD685)

c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California.

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~

WAR RECORD FOR PERIOD 21 SEPTEMBER 1943 to 25 JUNE 1945

taken under fire by the PICKING. One of the planes was destroyed and the other retired without attacking.

On the morning of the 25th, word was received of an attack by heavy enemy surface units upon one of our CVE groups off SAMAR Island. The PICKING with two other destroyers (the SPROSTON and HALE) was detached from the transport screen on orders from ComTaskFor SEVENTY-NINE to proceed back to LEYTE GULF and to attack any enemy vessels encountered enroute.

This force of three destroyers steamed toward LEYTE GULF at high speed. Shortly after noon, they were ordered to join the screen of a CVE group which had been under heavy enemy air attack and suffered some damage to its carriers and escort vessels. While steaming with this force, there were a number of sporadic enemy air raids none of which broke through the combat air patrol.

At 2000 that night, TBS and radar contact were made with a second group of CVE's. This group had lost its escort vessels and two CVE's in the battle off SAMAR Island. The PICKING, HALE, and SPROSTON were detached to join them and to investigate a "skunk" which was trailing them. This "skunk" eventually proved to be an enemy submarine which submerged as the destroyers approached. The SPROSTON established sound contact and attacked with full depth charge pattern. The PICKING and HALE closed to attack but were unable to regain the contact. At this point, two unidentified planes which were approaching were taken under fire by the PICKING and the HALE. One of these was destroyed and the other retired. The SPROSTON was then left to hold the submarine down during the remainder of the night and the HALE and PICKING proceeded to take up screening stations on the second CVE group.

On the 26th the PICKING was detached to join the escort of the MOUNT OLYMPUS and AURIGA, which were leaving LEYTE GULF for MANUS.

From 26 October to 27 December, this ship was engaged in routine escort duties or in tasks connected with ship's logistics and maintenance. On 20 November, the PICKING escorted transports loaded with reinforcements back into LEYTE GULF. While unloading operations were proceeding, the force was attacked by four "suicide" Jap fighter planes. Two of these were taken under fire by the ship's five inch and automatic weapons. The PICKING was credited with an "assist" in the splashing of one of these planes. This was the only action worthy of comment which occurred during this period.

On 27 December the PICKING departed MANUS for LINGAYEN GULF on LUZON as a part of the escort for the landing craft and control groups of Task Force SEVENTY-NINE. The objective was reached on 9 January, 1945, after a voyage which was uneventful as far as the ship was immediately concerned.

U.S.S. PICKING (DD685)

c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California.

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-N-T-I-A-L~~

WAR RECORDED FOR PERIOD 21 SEPTEMBER 1943 to 25 JUNE 1945

Enemy planes were frequently reported in the area during the passage through the Philippine Islands, but only one attack was made on the Task Group. None of our ships were damaged by this attack and one enemy fighter bomber was shot down by the landing craft.

During the assault on the beaches at LINGAYEN GULF on 9 January, the ship functioned as part of the anti-submarine and anti-aircraft screen for the transports and landing craft. Several enemy aircraft were taken under fire by the five inch and automatic weapons, but no observed damage was done to the enemy planes.

On the evening of the ninth, the PICKING joined the screen of unloaded transports retiring to LEYTE GULF. This voyage was accomplished without remarkable incident.

The ship returned to LUZON as part of the escort for the transport echelon which effected landings on the San Antonio-San Felipe beaches, on 29 January. The landings were made without incident, as the beach-head proved to have been occupied by friendly guerrilla forces.

For the next four days, the ship participated in the anti-submarine and anti-aircraft screen about the transports and landing craft while they unloaded. No definite enemy counter-action occurred, though unidentified aircraft occasionally approached the area.

From 2 to 13 February, the ship operated in and about Subic Bay.

On 13 February, the PICKING and the USS YOUNG gave close fire support to minesweeps clearing known minefields from the waters around Mariveles Bay and Corregidor. As the enemy did not fire at the minesweeps, the ship bombarded targets of opportunity on Southern Corregidor and about the entrance to Mariveles Bay. (The PICKING, incidentally, fired the first shell of the war, from a U. S. Naval vessel, into Corregidor).

On the night of 14-15 February, the ship screened assault shipping from SUBIC BAY to Mariveles Bay. The PICKING then carried out scheduled bombardment of the east side of the Bay, immediately prior to the landings, which were effected without difficulty about 0900. Throughout the remainder of the day the ship was engaged in screening operations.

The following morning (16 February), the ship carried out scheduled bombardment and close support of the beach-head in the San Jose area of Corregidor. After the landing of our troops, targets of opportunity were taken under fire. At least one enemy battery firing at our landing craft was silenced by direct hits from the PICKING's five inch guns, and mortar fire on the beaches was neutralized.

Late on the afternoon of the 16th the ship was relieved of her fire

U.S.S. PICKING (DD685)

c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WAR RECORD FOR PERIOD 21 SEPTEMBER 1943 to 25 JUNE 1945.

support duties and departed for LEYTE.

The period from 18 February to 1 March was spent in LEYTE GULF carrying out tasks connected with the ship's logistics and maintenance.

The period from 18 February to 21 March was spent in LEYTE GULF in carrying out operations connected with ship's logistics and maintenance and in training exercises in preparation for the OKINAWA operation.

On 21 March the PICKING departed LEYTE GULF for KERAMA RETTO, OKINAWA GUNTO, as one of the screening and support ships for the KERAMA RETTO assault force. The voyage was uneventful until the 25th of March when the task force was spotted by a low flying JUDY, which did not attack.

The task force arrived off KERAMA RETTO before dawn on 26 March, and began deploying for the assault. The PICKING took its assigned screening station. By 0800 landing operations were underway. There were intermittent air raids during the day in which several of our ships were hit by suicide planes. Prior to sunset the transports regrouped for night retirement from the islands, the PICKING acting as one of the screening vessels. There were several air raids on the force during the night.

For the next four days the PICKING operated as screening vessel off KERAMA RETTO during the day and at night escorted the transport vessels in their retirement. There were intermittent air raids but, otherwise, no noteworthy incidents.

On 31 March the PICKING was ordered to investigate and destroy a derelict reported near KEISE SHIMA off Southwestern OKINAWA. This was found to be a damaged enemy lugger. Attempts at destruction with 5 inch and 40mm shell fire and by depth charging proved ineffective, so the ship stood by to patrol this navigational hazard as it lay on the track of the vessels of the OKINAWA Assault Force which were due to arrive late that night.

On 1 April the PICKING was assigned for duty in Task Force 54, the fire support and covering force for the OKINAWA operation. The ship remained assigned to this force for the next 68 days, operating principally as a fire support ship for land operations and occasionally as a screening vessel for the cruisers and battleships of the force or as a "fly catcher" to prevent Jap small craft activity, particularly that of suicide boats. During this period of constant day and night bombardment, the PICKING fired over 15,000 rounds of five inch ammunition into Japanese positions on Southern OKINAWA, destroying a number of enemy artillery pieces, dumps, vehicles, pill boxes, sealing numerous caves, and killing an unknown number of enemy troops. The

U.S.S. PICKING (DD685)

c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WAR RECORD FOR PERIOD 21 SEPTEMBER 1943 to 25 JUNE 1945.

ship was almost constantly on firing station except for those periods when it was necessary to replenish fuel and ammunition or when it was assigned screening duties. During the day, the firing was directed by air and land spotters. At night, illumination and harassing fire was conducted by sector fire and, when necessary, directed by land spotters.

Hardly a day passed without at least one enemy air raid. Usually there were several. During daylight most of the enemy planes were intercepted and destroyed before reaching the area of concentrated shipping around Southern OKINAWA. At night enemy planes were able to reach the area almost at will, but, while their activities were a nuisance, they did very little effective damage.

As a day to day summary of events is outside the scope of this summary, only the outstanding events of this period from 1 April to 7 June will be outlined.

On 3 April, shortly after midnight while screening battleships and cruisers of TF 54 in their night retirement west of OKINAWA, the PICKING was attacked by a low flying BETTY which dropped a torpedo. The torpedo exploded after passing close astern.

On the afternoon of 5 April the PICKING was fired on by shore battery located on Southern OKINAWA. The principal target for the battery proved to be the U.S.S. NEVADA which was hit several times. Together with the other fire support ships, the PICKING conducted counter battery fire which speedily eliminated further fire from the enemy.

On the afternoon of 6 April, while proceeding to join the heavies of TF 54 for night retirement sortie, the PICKING was attacked by four TONY type Japanese aircraft approaching low over the water. Two of these were driven off by gunfire. The other two persisted in their attack. The first of these exploded from 40mm hits and crashed into the water 200 yards on the port quarter. Less than 60 seconds later the second was hit by a five inch burst and crashed 500 yards on the port beam.

In the late afternoon of 7 April off Western OKINAWA, the PICKING joined a battle force of battleships, cruisers, and destroyers forming up to meet a Japanese task force centered around the YAMATO, which was reported heading our way. Just before sunset, the PICKING opened fire on a ZEKE diving out of the overcase 3 miles off the starboard bow. The plane made a suicide crash into the U.S.S. MARYLAND. Late that night, the PICKING learned that the Japanese surface force had been disposed of by the planes of Task Force 58.

U.S.S. PICKING (DD685)

c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WAR RECORD FOR PERIOD 21 SEPTEMBER 1943 to 25 JUNE 1945.

On the night of 9 April while retiring with other ships of TF 54, the PICKING shot down an enemy aircraft believed to have been a BETTY, which was approaching the formation.

Before sunrise on 12 April while conducting night harassing and illumination fire, there was a large explosion 600 yards off the port quarter of the PICKING, believed to be bombs from plane that had just passed overhead.

On the afternoon of 17 April while screening the U.S.S. ARKANSAS in the NAKAGUSUKU WAN, the PICKING picked up a radioman from the U.S.S. BUNKER HILL who parachuted when his plane was forced to make a water landing due to engine trouble.

Shortly after midnight on 2 May, while conducting night harassing and illumination fire northwest of NAHA, shell splashes were observed close aboard. The PICKING proceeded to get underway and to conduct counter battery fire. The enemy battery, which was believed to be near NAHA, ceased fire very shortly after counter fire was started. No damage to our own forces was sustained.

Before dawn on 4 May while anchored in HAGUSHI ANCHORAGE, an enemy plane flying over the smoke covered ships dropped a string of bombs which landed in the water about 500 yards off the bow of the PICKING.

Shortly after dawn on 18 May, the PICKING went to the assistance of the U.S.S. LONGSHAW which had gone aground on a shoal just off NAHA Airfield on Southern OKINAWA. The PICKING made an attempt at tow but the cable parted. The PICKING then stood by to render assistance while the ARIKARA (AT-98) attempted towing. At 1100 the LONGSHAW reported herself underfire from enemy shore batteries. The PICKING commenced immediate counter battery fire. The LONGSHAW was hit amidships and then forward. There followed a violent explosion which destroyed the forward part of the ship as far back as the mast. This was followed by a raging fire which appeared for a time to engulf the entire ship but was later seen to center about the demolished forward section. Meanwhile the shore battery shifted its attention to the PICKING. Several shell splashes were observed fairly close aboard. By this time all fire support ships in the vicinity were carrying out counter battery fire which very quickly quieted the enemy guns. The gig was put in the water to aid in the rescue of LONGSHAW survivors, many of whom could be seen in the water amidst the debris and burning oil.

Some 30 LONGSHAW men were picked up and carried to an LCI which was standing in close for rescue work. While the gig was alongside effecting transfer, the LCI was hit by enemy shell fire from the shore.

U.S.S. PICKING (DD685)

c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WAR RECORD FOR PERIOD 21 SEPTEMBER 1943 to 25 JUNE 1945.

Many of the survivors jumped back into the water, necessitating their re-rescue.

By afternoon it was apparent that the LONGSHAW was beyond salvage. The PICKING was ordered to destroy her by torpedo fire. This proved difficult because of the shallow waters and strong current. Five torpedoes were fired with two hits. One of the "hits" failed to explode. The other destroyed the after portion of the ship. The remainder of the LONGSHAW was destroyed by 5 inch fire from the EDWARDS and the PICKING.

While anchored in HAGUSHI ANCHORAGE on the morning of 28 May, a TONY flew out of the overcast overhead and made a suicide dive on an LCI astern of the PICKING. The plane missed and exploded in the water. That afternoon while taking fire support station off NAHA Airfield, the PICKING was fired on by enemy shore battery whose first shell landed about 100 yards from the ship off the starboard beam. Speed was increased and the ship radically maneuvered. Counter battery fire was commenced as soon as the flashes from the enemy gun were spotted. A few minutes later the enemy ceased firing.

On the morning of 2 June, the PICKING maneuvered to within 4000 yards of the shore to permit strafing of the town of KIYAMU with the 40mm guns. Enemy troops were flushed from buildings and many fires started.

Just before sunset on 5 June, while on firing station off Southern OKINAWA, two enemy planes broke out of the overcast and passed immediately astern. One suicide - crashed into the MISSISSIPPI, the other into the LOUISVILLE.

On 7 June, the PICKING was relieved of fire support duties. By this date over 15,000 rounds of 5 inch ammunition had been fired and the bores of the guns were so eroded that effective pin point fire was no longer possible. The Commanding Officer therefore requested other assignment pending regunning.

On 8 June, the PICKING took station off southeast KUME SHIMA as one of the destroyers of radar picket station number 9. The following days were uneventful as no enemy raids of more than one plane were made in this sector.

On 12 June the ships of the station were called in because of an approaching typhoon. The PICKING remained anchored at HAGUSHI until 16 June when she proceeded to radar picket station number 15, northwest of IE SHIMA.

On 20 June after 4 quiet days with little or no enemy air activity, the ship proceeded back to the HAGUSHI ANCHORAGE. The PICKING remained

U.S.S. PICKING (DD685)

c/o Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WAR RECORD FOR PERIOD 21 SEPTEMBER 1943 to 25 JUNE 1945.

in this vicinity until 23 June when she departed for SAIPAN as convoy escort.

On 25 June, the ship received the best news of the year - that the PICKING was to proceed to the West Coast for overhaul. At present writing she is so proceeding.

ENCLOSURE (A)

HISTORY OF THE USS PICKING (DD 685)

The contract for the USS PICKING (DD 685) was awarded to the Bethlehem Steel Company, Inc., Staten Island, New York, on June 14, 1942 and five months later, on the 24th of November 1942, her keel was laid in the company's Mariner's Harbor (Staten Island) yard.

The PICKING, a 2,050 ton destroyer of the Fletcher Class of 1941-42, was named in memory of Captain Sherwood Picking, USN, who died in a plane crash in Scotland en route to London on September 1, 1941. When the destroyer was launched, June 1, 1943, Mrs. Sherwood Picking, wife of the late Captain Picking, sponsored the ship.

Captain Sherwood Picking, born at Baltimore, Maryland, February 21, 1890, was graduated from the U. S. Naval Academy in the Class of 1911 and became Captain, July 1, 1939. During World War I, he was cited for distinguished and heroic action as commanding officer of a submarine which operated in waters infested with enemy vessels and mines.

In June 1936, Captain Picking was stationed at Harvard University in connection with the Naval Reserve Officers' Training Corps Unit. Later, he was placed in command of Submarine Squadron Three, with additional duty commanding the Submarine Base at Coco Solo, Canal Zone. He returned to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations in April 1941, after which he was assigned to temporary duty at London, England.

The USS PICKING was commissioned at the Brooklyn Navy Yard on September 21, 1943, at which time Commander R. S. Lamb, USN, assumed command.

After a six week shakedown in the Bermuda area of the British West Indies and a post-shakedown overhaul, the PICKING proceeded to the Canal Zone. Upon arrival at Balboa, C. Z., on December 9th, she reported to the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, for duty and shortly thereafter was assigned to the North Pacific Fleet.

The PICKING then sailed for Dutch Harbor in the Aleutian Islands and upon arrival, December 28, 1943, reported to Commander North Pacific Fleet and Commander Destroyer Squadron 49. Captain H. F. Gearing, USN, Commander DesRon 49, shifted his pennant aboard the USS PICKING on January 2, 1944.

For the next seven months the PICKING operated with the NINTH Fleet in the Aleutian area and during this time five offensive operations were carried out against enemy shipping and installations in the Jap-held Kurile Islands.

The first of these attacks occurred on February 4, 1944, when the destroyers and cruisers of the NINTH Fleet bombarded the Karabusaki area on Paramushiru. This was the first naval bombardment of Japanese home territory of World War II. Though there was some return fire from enemy batteries, none of the ships were hit and all returned to port unharmed except for damage caused by heavy North Pacific seas.

On the 3rd and 4th of March, this force again steamed for the Kuriles. The cruiser-destroyer force entered the Sea of Okhotsk in search for an enemy convoy known to be in the vicinity but, unfortunately, no enemy shipping was discovered. The force twice approached the southern shores of Paramushiru on March 4th but due to strong winds and high seas no bombardment could be carried out and the task force returned to its base.

On the 13th of June, the PICKING, with destroyers and cruisers of the NINTH Fleet, bombarded Matsuwa. Since dense fog prevented sighting of the island, the approach to the target and subsequent bombardment were carried out entirely by radar.

This task force returned to the Karabusaki area of Paramushiru on June 26, 1944, and bombarded the airfield and installations there. A number of surface radar contacts were taken under fire by the PICKING during the approach and retirement from the target area but the extent of damage could not be ascertained due to the heavy fog. These contacts were presumed to be fishing vessels.

On the 27th and 28th of July the destroyers of Squadron 49 conducted a sweep down the Kamchatka Peninsula into the waters off Paramushiru in an effort to clear the area of enemy picket boats believed to be there but, again, no enemy shipping was encountered.

The 1st of August, the force sailed from Attu, Aleutian Islands, for a third bombardment of Paramushiru. However, during the approach, the task force was twice detected by enemy planes and since surprise, was considered essential to the success of the mission, the bombardment was abandoned.

During the intervals between these operations, the PICKING was employed in routine assignments of escort duty, antisubmarine sweeps, searching for pilots of friendly planes forced down at sea, and training exercises; the ship being based at Adak and Attu during the entire period. A considerable portion of the time in port was spent repairing damage to the ship caused by the foul weather of the Aleutians. It was a testimony to the excellence of Navy material that the ship was able to take the constant weather battering without suffering more damage than she did, for she was never prevented from fully carrying out any of her assignments.

The PICKING left the Aleutian area for San Francisco, California, on August 8, 1944, and upon arrival spent a ten-day availability period for upkeep.

During this period, Lieutenant Commander B. J. Semmes, Jr., USN, relieved Commander R. S. Lamb, USN, as Commanding Officer; and Captain E. R. McLean, USN, relieved Captain H. F. Gearing, USN, as Commander, Destroyer Squadron 49.

The PICKING then left the West Coast and sailed for Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, where she arrived on August 31, 1944, and reported to the Commander, THIRD Fleet for duty. After a period of training and rehearsal exercises in Hawaiian waters, the destroyer departed for Manus, Admiralty Islands, on September 15th as one of the escort vessels for several divisions of attack transports. The ships reached

Seeadler Harbor, Manus, on October 3rd after an uneventful voyage.

For the next six months the PICKING was temporarily assigned to the SEVENTH Fleet and, during this time, participated in the Philippine Campaign operations.

With destination the Philippine area, the PICKING left Manus on October 14th as an escort vessel for the Southern Attack Force. The attack force entered Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands; on the 20th after an uneventful voyage and, during the next four days, the DD 685 functioned as part of the antiaircraft and antisubmarine screen for transports and landing craft during the assault on the southern beaches. At sunset on the 20th, three high-flying Japanese "Sally's" were taken under fire by the PICKING's 5-inch and automatic weapons with unobserved results. Though other planes were seen during the succeeding four days, none of them came within effective gun range.

On the afternoon of October 24, 1944, the PICKING weighed anchor from Leyte Gulf as part of the escort for the unloaded transports which were retiring to Hollandia, New Guinea. That night the force was approached by two unidentified planes which the PICKING took under fire. One of the planes was destroyed and the other retired without attacking.

On the morning of the 25th, word was received of an attack by heavy enemy surface units upon one of the Allied CVE (Escort aircraft carrier) groups off Samar Island, P. I. The PICKING, with two other destroyers (the SPROSTON and HALE), was detached from the transport screen to proceed back to Leyte Gulf and attack any enemy vessel encountered en route.

This force of three destroyers steamed toward Leyte Gulf at high speed and shortly after noon were ordered to join the screen of the CVE group which had been under heavy enemy air attack and had suffered damage to its carriers and escort vessels. While steaming with this force there were a number of sporadic enemy air raids but none of them broke through the combat air patrol.

At 8 p. m. that night contact was made with a second group of CVE's and it was found this group had lost its escort vessels and two CVE's in the battle off Samar Island. The PICKING, HALE, and SPROSTON were detached to join them and to investigate a "skunk" which was trailing the group. This "skunk" eventually proved to be an enemy submarine which submerged as the destroyers approached. The SPROSTON established sound contact and then attacked with depth charges after which the PICKING and HALE closed to attack but were unable to regain the contact. At this point, two unidentified planes approached and were taken under fire by the two latter destroyers. One Jap was shot down and the other, not seeking to join battle, retired. The SPROSTON was then left to hold the submarine down during the remainder of the night and the HALE and PICKING proceeded to take up screening position with the second CVE group.

On the 26th of October 1944, the PICKING was detached to join the escort of the MOUNT OLYMPUS and AURIGA, which were leaving Leyte Gulf for Manus. From this date until December 27th, the destroyer was engaged in routine escort duties or tasks in connection with ship's

replenishment and maintenance.

The DD 685 escorted transports loaded with reinforcements back into Leyte Gulf on November 20th and, while unloading operations were proceeding, the force was attacked by four "suicide" Japanese fighter planes. Two of these were taken under fire by the ship's batteries and the PICKING was credited with an "assist" in splashing one of these planes. This was the only action of importance which occurred during this period.

On December 27, 1944, the PICKING departed from Manus for Lingayen Gulf, Luzon, as an escort unit for the landing craft and control groups of Task Force 79. The objective was reached on January 9, 1945 without any incidents of note as far as the "685" was concerned. Enemy planes were frequently reported in the area during the passage through the Philippines, but only one attack was made on the task group. None of the ships were damaged in this attack but one enemy fighter-bomber was shot down by the landing craft.

During the assault on the beaches at Lingayen Gulf on January 9th, the PICKING functioned as part of the antisubmarine and antiaircraft screen for the transports and landing craft. Several enemy aircraft were taken under fire by the PICKING but no observed damage was done to the enemy planes. On the evening of the 9th, the PICKING joined the screen for the unloaded transports and the group retired to Leyte Gulf without incident.

The ship then returned to Luzon as one of the escort vessels for the transport echelon which effected the landings on the San Antonio-San Felipe beaches on the 29th of January. The landings were made without incident, as the beachheads proved to have been occupied by friendly guerrilla forces.

For the next four days the ship operated in the antisubmarine and antiaircraft screen about the transports and landing craft while they unloaded. No definite enemy counter-action occurred, though unidentified aircraft occasionally approached the area.

From the 2nd to the 13th of February, the ship operated in and about Subic Bay, Philippine Islands.

On the 13th of February, the PICKING and the USS YOUNG gave close fire support to minesweepers clearing known minefields from the waters around Mariveles Bay and Corregidor. As the enemy did not fire at the minesweeping vessels, the PICKING bombarded targets of opportunity on Southern Corregidor and around the entrance to Mariveles Bay. The PICKING fired the first shell of the war, from a U. S. Navy vessel, into Corregidor.

On the night of February 14-15, the DD 685 screened assault shipping from Subic Bay to Mariveles Bay. The destroyer then carried out scheduled bombardment of the east side of the Bay, immediately prior to the landings, which were effected without difficulty about 9 o'clock a. m. Throughout the remainder of the day the ship was engaged in screening operations.

The following morning (February 16, 1945), the PICKING carried

out a scheduled bombardment and close support of the beachhead in the San Jose area of Corregidor. After the landing of the U. S. troops, targets of opportunity were taken under fire. At least one enemy battery, firing at the landing craft, was silenced by direct hits from the PICKING's 5-inch guns, and mortar fire from the beaches was also neutralized.

Late in the afternoon of the 16th, the ship was relieved of her fire support duties and headed back to Leyte, where the period from February 18th to March 1st was spent in replenishing supplies and in maintenance, as well as participating in exercises in preparation for the forthcoming Okinawa operation.

As one of the screening and support ships for the assault force, on March 21st the PICKING got underway from Leyte Gulf for Kerama Retto, Okinawa Gunto. The voyage was uneventful, though the task force was spotted by a low-flying "Judy" on March 25th.

No attack developed from the "Judy" and the task force arrived without incident off Kerama Retto before dawn on the 26th of March. As the ships began to deploy for the assault, the PICKING took an assigned screening station. By 8 o'clock a. m. landing operations were underway. There were intermittent air raids during the day in which several of the ships were hit by suicide planes. Just before sunset, the transports regrouped for night retirement from the islands with the PICKING operating with the screening vessels.

For the next four days the PICKING continued her screening operations off Kerama Retto during the daytime and, at night, escorted the transports to their retirement area at sea. There were intermittent air raids but none of significance.

A derelict was reported near Keise Shima, off southwestern Okinawa on March 31st, and the PICKING was ordered to investigate and destroy it. The wrecked vessel was found to be a damaged enemy lugger and attempts at destruction -- with 5-inch and 40 millimeter shell fire, and by depth charging -- proved ineffective. The ship then stood by to patrol this navigational hazard which lay in the path of the Okinawa Assault Force, due to arrive late that night.

On April 1st, 1945, the PICKING was assigned for duty in Task Force 54, the fire support and covering force for the Okinawa operation. She remained with this force for the next 68 days, operating principally as fire support ship for land operations and occasionally as a screening vessel for the cruisers and battleships of the task force. Also, she sometimes acted as "fly catcher" to prevent Jap small craft activity, particularly that of suicide boats. During this period of constant day and night bombardment, the PICKING fired over 15,000 rounds of 5-inch ammunition into Japanese positions on southern Okinawa, destroying a number of enemy artillery pieces, dumps, vehicles pill boxes; sealing numerous caves; and killing an unknown number of enemy troops. The ship was almost constantly on firing station except for those periods when it was necessary to replenish fuel and ammunition or when she was assigned screening duties. During the day, the firing was directed by air and land spotters. At night, illumination and harassing fire was conducted by sector fire and, when necessary, directed by land spotters.

Hardly a day passed without at least one enemy air raid; usually there were several. During daylight most of the enemy planes were intercepted and destroyed before reaching the area of concentrated shipping around southern Okinawa, but at night the Japs were able to reach the area almost at will. While the Jap activities were a nuisance, they did very little effective damage.

On the 3rd of April, shortly after midnight, while screening battleships and cruisers of Task Force 54 in their night retirement west of Okinawa, the PICKING was attacked by a low flying "Betty" which dropped a torpedo. After passing close astern of the destroyer, the "tin fish" exploded harmlessly.

The PICKING was fired on by a shore battery, April 5th, which was located on southern Okinawa. The principal target for the enemy battery, however, proved to be the USS NEVADA which was hit several times. Together with the other fire support ships, the PICKING conducted counter battery fire which speedily eliminated the enemy gun position.

The following afternoon, while proceeding to join the heavy units of Task Force 54 for the night retirement sortie, the PICKING was attacked by four "Tony" type Japanese planes approaching low over the water. Two of these were driven off by gunfire but the other two persisted in their attack. The first of these exploded from 40 millimeter hits and crashed into the water 200 yards off the port quarter. Less than 60 seconds later the second was hit by a 5-inch burst and splashed 500 yards off the port beam.

In the late afternoon of April 7, 1945, off western Okinawa, the PICKING joined a battle force of battleships, cruisers, and destroyers which were forming up to meet a Japanese task force, centered around the YAMATO, and was reported heading in the direction of Okinawa. Just before sunset, the PICKING opened fire on a "Zeke" diving out of the overcast some three miles off the starboard bow. The Jap plane, however, was not hit and made a suicide crash into the USS MARYLAND. Late that night, the PICKING learned that the Japanese surface force throat had been disposed of by the planes of Task Force 58.

On the night of April 9th, while retiring with other ships of Task Force 54, the DD 685 shot down an enemy aircraft believed to have been a "Betty" which approached the formation.

While screening the USS ARKANSAS in the Nakagusuku Wan, during the afternoon of April 17, the destroyer picked up a radioman, from the USS BUNKER HILL, who had parachuted when his plane was forced to make a water landing due to engine trouble.

Shortly after midnight on May 2nd, while conducting night harassing and illumination fire northwest of Naha, shells began to splash close aboard the destroyer. The ship got underway immediately and conducted counter battery fire. The enemy battery, believed to be near Naha, ceased fire very shortly thereafter.

Shortly after dawn on May 18th, the PICKING went to the assistance of the USS LONGSHAW, a destroyer which had gone aground on a shoal just off Naha Airfield on southern Okinawa. After making an attempt

to tow, the cable parted, so the PICKING stood by to render assistance while the ARIKARA (AT 98) attempted towing. At 11 o'clock a. m. the LONGSHAW reported herself under fire from enemy shore batteries and the PICKING immediately turned her guns on the Jap emplacements. The LONGSHAW was hit amidships and then, again, forward. There followed a violent explosion which destroyed the forward part of the ship as far back as the mast. This blast was followed by a raging fire which appeared for a time to engulf the entire ship but was later seen to center about the demolished forward section. Meanwhile, the shore battery shifted its attention to the PICKING. Several shells hit fairly close aboard but, by this time, all fire support ships in the vicinity were concentrating their fire on the enemy gun position and quickly silenced it.

The PICKING immediately put a boat in the water to aid in the rescue of LONGSHAW survivors, many of whom could be seen amidst the floating debris and burning oil. Some 30 LONGSHAW men were picked up and taken to an LCI which was standing close in for rescue work. While the boat was alongside effecting the transfer, the LCI was also hit by enemy shell fire from the shore and many of the survivors jumped back into the water, necessitating their re-rescue.

By afternoon it was apparent that the LONGSHAW was beyond salvage and the PICKING was ordered to destroy her by torpedo fire. This proved difficult because of the shallow waters and strong current and only two hits were gained out of five torpedoes fired. One of the "hits" failed to explode and the other destroyed the after portion of the ship. What remained of the stricken vessel was destroyed by 5-inch gunfire from the USS EDWARDS and PICKING.

On June 7, 1945, the PICKING was relieved of fire support duties since, due to so much firing, her 5-inch guns were so eroded that effective pin point fire was no longer possible. On the following day the destroyer took a station off southeast Kume Shima as radar picket. The following few days were uneventful since no enemy raids of more than one plane were made in the sector and on the 12th of June all the ships were called in because of an approaching typhoon. The PICKING remained anchored at Hagushi until the 16th, when she proceeded to another radar picket station northwest of Ie Shima. After four quiet days with little or no enemy activity, the ship proceeded back to the Hagushi Anchorage. She remained in this vicinity until the 23rd of June when she departed for Saipan as convoy escort.

On June 25, 1945, the DD 685 received orders to proceed to the United States for overhaul, the cessation of World War II hostilities occurring while she was in United States waters.

The USS PICKING (DD 685) earned five (5) battle stars on the Asiatic-Pacific Area Service Ribbon for participating in the following operations:

- 1 Star/Kurile Islands Operation
 - Masashi-Wan-Kurabu-Zaki - 4 Feb. 1944
 - Matsuwa - 13 June 1944
 - Kurabu-Zaki - 26 June 1944

Battle Stars Continued

1 Star/Leyte Operation

Leyte Landings - 10 Oct. - 29 Nov. 1944

1 Star/Luzon Operation

Lingayen Gulf Landing - 4-18 Jan. 1945

1 Star/Manila Bay-Bicol Operations

Mariveles-Corregidor - 14-28 Feb. 1945

1 Star/Okinawa Gunto Operation

Assault and Occupation of Okinawa Gunto - 24 March - 30 June 1945

* * * *

STATISTICS

OVERALL LENGTH	376 feet
BEAM	40 feet
DISPLACEMENT	2,050 tons
SPEED	35 knots
ACCOMMODATIONS	24 officers, 305 enlisted men.

Compiled: October 1950 hts
Restencilled: ~~October~~ 1950

NAVY DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
DIVISION OF NAVAL HISTORY (OP 09B9)
SHIPS' HISTORIES SECTION

HISTORY OF USS PICKING (DD 685)

USS PICKING (DD 685) was named in honor of Captain Sherwood Picking, USN, who lost his life in a plane crash in Scotland enroute to London, England, 1 September 1941. Captain Picking was born in Baltimore, Maryland, 21 February 1890, and graduated from the United States Naval Academy in the class of 1911. During World War I, he was cited for his distinguished and heroic actions as commanding officer of a submarine operating in enemy waters. Among his later commands were Submarine Squadron Three with additional duty in command of the Submarine Base at Coco Solo, Canal Zone. He served in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations from April 1941, and at the time of his death, was performing temporary duty in London.

PICKING was built by the Bethlehem Steel Company at its Staten Island yards, where her keel was laid 24 November 1942. Mrs. Sherwood Picking, widow of Captain Picking, was sponsor at the destroyer's launching 1 June 1943. PICKING was commissioned at the Brooklyn Navy Yard 21 September 1943, with Commander Raymond S. Lamb, USN, as her first commanding officer.

After a six week shakedown off Bermuda, and a post-shakedown availability, PICKING sailed for the Panama Canal Zone, where she arrived 9 December 1943 to report for duty in the Pacific Fleet. Assigned to duty in the North Pacific, she cleared for Dutch Harbor in the Aleutian Islands, where she arrived 28 December to assume duty as flagship of Destroyer Squadron Forty-Nine.

During the next seven months, while operating with the Ninth Fleet in the Aleutian area, PICKING took part in five offensive operations against enemy shipping, and installations in the Kurile Islands, Japanese possessions. The first of these attacks occurred on 4 February 1944, when the destroyers and cruisers of the Ninth Fleet bombarded the Karabu-Zaki area on Paramushiru. In this first naval bombardment of Japanese home territory in World War II, none of the United States ships were hit by the return fire of enemy shore batteries, and all returned to port unharmed save from the damage caused by heavy North Pacific seas.

On 3 and 4 March 1944, the same force again sailed for the Kuriles. After searching the Sea of Okhotsk in search of enemy shipping, none of which was found, the Ninth Fleet ships encountered strong winds and high seas, the usual concomitants of action in the North Pacific. Twice an approach was made to Paramushiru for another bombardment, but the poor weather conditions prevented the carrying out of this operation.

The third such operation found PICKING, in company with other cruisers and destroyers, bombarding Matsuwa on 13 June 1944. Dense fog prevented any sighting of the island; the approach to the target, and the subsequent bombardment were carried out completely by radar direction. Once more battling heavy fog, often a worse enemy than the Japanese in these waters, the same task force returned to the Karabu-Zaki area 26 June, and bombarded the airfield and nearby installations. A number of surface radar contacts were taken under fire by PICKING during the approach and retirement from the target area, but the extent of the damage inflicted on the presumed fighting ships could not be determined because of the fog.

The next in this series of offensive actions came 27 and 28 July 1944, when PICKING and the others of Destroyer Squadron Forty-Nine conducted an anti-shipping sweep down the Kamchatka Peninsula to Paramushiru. No enemy shipping was encountered.

PICKING's last operation in this area began 1 August 1944, when the task force sailed from Attu for a third bombardment of Paramushiru. However, during the approach, the force was twice detected by enemy planes, and since surprise was essential to the success of the mission, the bombardment was cancelled.

Between the operations described above, PICKING operated from Adak and Attu on escort duty, anti-submarine sweeps, searches for downed pilots, and training exercises. Much time had to be spent in port repairing damages to the ship caused by the very poor weather conditions in which she operated. PICKING proudly claimed, however, that she was able to maintain herself so effectively that she was never prevented from carrying out any assignment fully.

PICKING cleared the Aleutians for the last time 8 August 1944, bound for a ten-day availability period at San Francisco, and a change of duty. On 31 August, she arrived at Pearl Harbor, where she reported to the Third Fleet for duty. After a period of training and rehearsal exercises in warm Hawaiian waters, she sailed for Manus in the Admiralty Islands on 15 September, in escort for several divisions of attack transports. She dropped anchor in Seeadler Harbor, Manus, 3 October.

Operating with the Seventh Fleet during the next six months, PICKING took part in the liberation of the Philippine Islands. She sailed from Manus 14 October, in escort of the Southern Attack Force bound for the initial landings on Leyte. The passage was made without incident, and the force entered Leyte Gulf 20 October. During the next four days, PICKING formed part of the anti-aircraft and anti-submarine screen protecting the vulnerable transports and landing craft during the assault on the southern beaches. Only once during this time did Japanese aircraft come within range of PICKING's guns.

PICKING cleared Leyte Gulf 24 October 1944, in escort of unloaded transports making for Hollandia, New Guinea. That night, the force was attacked by two aircraft, one of which PICKING destroyed, and the other of which quickly retired. This orderly movement of transports away from the assault area was interrupted in the morning of 25 October, when word was flashed of the Japanese heavy surface units attacking United States escort carriers off the Philippine island of Samar. This newest development in the raging Battle for Leyte Gulf called PICKING, with destroyers SPROSTON (DD 577) and HALE (DD 642) back to the Philippines, with orders to attack any enemy ship encountered enroute to Leyte Gulf.

Steaming at their best speed, the three destroyers joined the screen of the escort carrier group on 25 October 1944. During that afternoon, no enemy air raids were able to break through the combat air patrol, and the hard-pressed carriers and escorts were able to relax somewhat from the tension of the previous twenty-four hours. PICKING, SPROSTON, and HALE moved on to join the protective screen for another of the escort carrier groups which had been badly damaged, and which lost most of its escorts. At 2000, the three destroyers began an investigation of a surface radar contact trailing the group. The contact, a submarine, submerged as the destroyers approached, but SPROSTON quickly established sound contact, and began a depth charge attack. As PICKING and HALE moved in to join the attack, the contact was lost, and at that moment, two enemy planes were spotted. One Japanese plane was splashed by PICKING and HALE, while the other drew away. Later PICKING and HALE steamed to rejoin the escort carriers leaving SPROSTON to hold the enemy submarine down through the night.

The Battle for Leyte Gulf over, PICKING was detached 26 October 1944 to proceed to Manus escorting MOUNT OLYMPUS (AGC 8) and AURIGA (AK 98). A period of escort duty and routine maintenance and replenishment activities followed until 20 November, when PICKING again entered Leyte Gulf, escorting reinforcement-laden transports. As unloading operations proceeded, the force was attacked by four Japanese fighter planes, apparently suicide-intent. In the action which followed, PICKING was credited with aiding in the splashing of one of these.

PICKING's next major operation was the attack on Lingayen Gulf, for which she sailed from Manus 27 December 1944 in the escort for the landing craft and control groups. Arriving in the Gulf 9 January 1945, after a passage during which only one air attack was made on the group, PICKING took up duty screening the transports and landing craft. During the landings, she took several enemy aircraft under fire, but was not able to observe the damage inflicted. In the evening, she joined the escort of the unloaded transports, and the group retired to Leyte Gulf without incident.

PICKING's next action in the Philippines came 29 January 1945, when she sailed escorting transports bound for landings in Subic Bay. The landings were without opposition, as Philippine guerillas had already secured the beaches. During the next four days, PICKING remained on station screening the transports and landing craft as they unloaded, then took part in the continuing operations in Subic Bay. On 13 February, she joined YOUNG (DD 580) to give close fire support to minesweepers at work around Corregidor and Mariveles Bay. This was in preparation for the landings to follow there. Since the enemy did not fire at the sweepers, PICKING bombarded targets of opportunity in the area, and claimed the distinction of firing the first naval shell of the war into Corregidor.

On the night of 14-15 February 1945, PICKING screened assault shipping from Subic Bay to Mariveles Bay, then fired in the pre-landing bombardment on the east side of the Bay. As the landings were made, PICKING remained to screen the transports and landing craft through the day. On 16 February, she performed similar duty as the San Jose beaches of Corregidor were assaulted. While giving close support, PICKING's guns silenced at least one enemy battery firing at the landing craft, and she was successful in neutralizing mortar fire from the beaches.

Late that afternoon, PICKING was relieved and ordered to Leyte, where the period from 18 February to 1 March 1945 was spent in replenishment, and in preparations for the Okinawa operation. She sailed from Leyte Gulf screening the force destined for the preliminary assault on Kerama Retto 21 March, and although the task force was spotted by a low-flying Japanese aircraft on 25 March, all units arrived without incident off Kerama Retto, before dawn on 26 March. Here PICKING took an assigned screening station, and by 0800, landing operations were underway. During the day, the pattern of the Okinawa operation began to emerge, as several ships were hit by suicide planes. Just before sunset, the transports regrouped for their night retirement from the island, with PICKING in the screen.

During the next four days, the operation followed the same plan, with PICKING screening unloading operations off Kerama Retto in the daytime, and escorting the transports on their night retirements. There were intermittent air raids, but none of them seemed of significance to PICKING's battle-hardened crew. As the moment for the assault on Okinawa proper approached, PICKING was sent to investigate a navigational hazard off southwestern Okinawa, and to patrol it, since it lay in the path of the Okinawa Assault Force, due to arrive that night.

On 1 April 1945, date of the initial assault on Okinawa, PICKING joined Task Force 54, the fire support and covering force, with whom she operated for the next 68 days. She was employed principally in fire support, but on occasion was called upon to act in the screen of the cruisers and battleships. Along with her screening duty came what was known as "fly catching"; that is, preventing the attack upon United

States forces of Japanese small craft and suicide boats.

During this period of almost constant day and night bombardment, PICKING fired over 15,000 rounds of 5-inch ammunition into Japanese positions on southern Okinawa, destroying a number of enemy artillery pieces, dumps, vehicles, pill boxes; sealing numerous caves; and killing an unknown number of enemy troops. The ship was almost constantly on one firing station or another, except for the periods when she was assigned to screening duty, or engaging in necessary replenishment. Hardly a day passed without at least one enemy air raid; usually there were several.

On 3 April 1945, while covering the retirement at night of battleships and cruisers west of Okinawa, PICKING was attacked by a low flying Japanese plane, which dropped a torpedo. After passing close astern of the destroyer, the torpedo exploded harmlessly. PICKING was next under fire from a shore battery on 5 April, but her own fire, and that of other fire support ships, speedily eliminated the enemy gun position.

The following afternoon, while underway to join the heavy units of the task force for the night retirement, PICKING was attacked by four enemy planes, which approached low over the water. Two were driven off, but the remaining two were more persistent. The first of these exploded from 40 mm hits, and crashed into the water 200 yards off the port quarter. Less than 60 seconds later, the second was hit by a 5-inch burst, and splashed 500 yards off the port beam.

PICKING added another splashed enemy plane to her score in the evening of 9 April 1945, off western Okinawa, and on 17 April, rescued a downed aircrew man from the water. On 2 May, she was under enemy shore fire once more, while conducting night harassing and elimination fire northwest of Naha. PICKING conducted counter-battery fire and the enemy battery ceased fire shortly thereafter.

Shortly after dawn 18 May 1945, PICKING sailed to assist destroyer LONGSHAW (DD 559), aground on a shoal just off Naha Airfield on southern Okinawa. Attempts to tow failed when the cable parted, and the tug ARIKARA (AT 98) came to renew the attempt, as PICKING stood by. At 1100, LONGSHAW reported herself under fire from enemy shore batteries, and PICKING trained her guns on the Japanese emplacements. The helpless LONGSHAW was hit amidships and then forward. A violent explosion destroyed the forward part of the ship as far back as the mast, and a raging fire ensued. Meanwhile, the shore battery turned its attention to PICKING, and several of its shells hit fairly close aboard. All fire support ships in the vicinity concentrated on the enemy gun position, and it was quickly silenced.

PICKING immediately put a boat over to aid in the rescue of LONGSHAW's survivors. Some 30 were picked up from the water and taken to a landing craft which was standing close in for rescue work. While

PICKING's boat was alongside the landing craft, the latter was hit by an enemy shell from the shore, and many of the survivors jumped back into the water, necessitating their re-rescue.

By afternoon it was apparent that LONGSHAW was beyond salvage, and PICKING was ordered to destroy her by torpedo fire. The shallow waters and strong current made this most difficult, but PICKING scored a hit which destroyed the after portion of the ship. Five inch gunfire from PICKING and another near-by destroyer finished off what was left of the stricken ship.

By 7 June 1945, PICKING had fired so many rounds that her five inch guns were eroded to the point at which effective fire was no longer possible. As a result, she was relieved of fire support duties and the next day took station south of Kume Shima as radar picket. The following few days were uneventful by the standards of the Okinawa operation, since no enemy raids of more than one plane were made in the sector. From 12 to 16 June, PICKING and the other radar pickets were called into Hagushi Anchorage as a typhoon threatened. PICKING returned to another radar picket station, this one northwest of Ie Shima, for four quiet days, and on 23 June cleared Hagushi Anchorage in the escort of a convoy bound for Saipan.

On 25 June 1945, PICKING was ordered to the United States for overhaul at San Francisco, and arrived there just before news of the Japanese surrender was received. Her overhaul was altered to that necessary before inactivation, and on 20 September she arrived at San Diego to prepare for decommissioning. She was placed out of commission, in reserve, 20 December 1945, berthed at San Diego.

PICKING was included in the mobilization plans activated by the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, and late in 1950, she was towed to Long Beach to prepare for activation. She was recommissioned 26 January 1951, and after fitting out and training, cleared Long Beach 14 April for the Panama Canal Zone, Guantanamo Bay, and Newport, Rhode Island, her new home port. She arrived in Newport 19 May, and became flagship of Destroyer Squadron Twenty-Four.

During the next two years, PICKING saw duty with the anti-submarine force of the Atlantic Fleet, made a six-week cold weather cruise off Labrador, had an overhaul in the Boston Naval Shipyard, and conducted training in the Caribbean and along the eastern seaboard of the United States. On 1 April 1953, she sailed for a round-the-world cruise which included a tour of duty in Korean waters.

Sailing by way of the Canal Zone, San Diego, Pearl Harbor, and Midway, PICKING reported for duty at Yokosuka 4 May 1953. During the next three months she served with Task Force 77, the fast carrier force, and with Task Force 81, with whom she conducted shore bombardment. She climaxed her Korean duty with a successful search for a downed Navy plane, whose sole survivor was rescued and brought back

USS PICKING (DD 685)

to land. On 5 August, PICKING cleared Sasebo, bound for Hong Kong, Singapore, Ceylon, the Suez Canal, through which she passed 9 September, ports in the Mediterranean, and Boston, where she arrived for overhaul 2 October.

Resuming her schedule of stateside operations for the next year, PICKING then prepared for a tour of European duty, for which she sailed 5 January 1955. For three weeks, she operated out of Londonderry, Northern Ireland, during a period of indoctrination training in British convoy escort techniques. Then she sailed to the Mediterranean for a normal tour of duty with the Sixth Fleet. She returned to Newport 26 May 1955, and resumed operations from her home port.

Early in 1956, as PICKING lay in the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard for overhaul, she received word of the impending transfer of her squadron to the Pacific Fleet. On 29 March, she sailed for the Panama Canal Zone, where she joined the Pacific Fleet. In an impressive ceremony in Gatun Lake of the Canal, Destroyer Squadron Twenty-Four became Destroyer Squadron Twenty-Three, succeeding to the glorious tradition of World War II's famous "Little Beaver" Squadron. PICKING arrived at her new home port, Long Beach, 15 April 1956, almost five years to the day since she had left it following her recommissioning.

After underway training in May, PICKING sailed 5 June 1956, for a tour of duty in the Far East, where she served with the Seventh Fleet. She took part in several task force operations, and formed part of the Taiwan patrol, as well as visiting a number of ports in Japan, the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. She returned to Long Beach 18 November 1956.

The hard training and constant attention to efficiency in all departments of the ship were rewarded with the Battle Efficiency "E", the Engineering "E", and the Anti-submarine Warfare "E" for the fiscal year 1957. Shortly after the presentation of these awards, PICKING was underway for another Far Eastern tour, which began when she stood out of Long Beach 13 August 1957, bound for Samoa, New Zealand, and the more usual ports visited by ships of the Pacific Fleet in their Far Eastern deployments. She returned to Long Beach 24 January 1958, and almost at once began an overhaul.

PICKING's next tour of duty in the Western Pacific, performed from 8 October 1958 through 27 March 1959, saw her operating primarily with a hunter-killer group formed around the carrier YORKTOWN (CVS 10). During this tour, she performed humanitarian duty when she carried emergency supplies to the Japanese town of Koniya, on Amami O Shima, which had been destroyed by fire.

Returning to operations along the west coast of the United States, PICKING took part in a variety of civic celebrations, including the Seattle Seafair and similar activities. In August 1959, her squadron,

USS PICKING (DD 685)

YORKTOWN, and three new Canadian destroyers, HMCS FRAISER, HMCS MARGAREE, and HMCS SKEENA, conducted SLAMEX 1-60, a joint anti-submarine warfare exercise off the coast of Washington, Oregon, and northern California.

PICKING's most recent deployment to the Western Pacific was performed from 5 December 1959 to 31 May 1960. She returned to prepare for an overhaul in Long Beach Naval Shipyard, scheduled for July 1960.

PICKING earned the following battle stars for her service in World War II and in the Korean War:

1 Star/KURILE ISLANDS OPERATION:

Masashi-Wan-Kurabu-Zaki - 4 Feb 1944
Matsuwa - 13 Jun 1944
Kurabu-Zaki - 26 Jun 1944

1 Star/LEYTE OPERATION:

Leyte Landings - 20 Oct, 18 Nov 1944

1 Star/LUZON OPERATION:

Lingayen Gulf Landing - 9 Jan 1945

1 Star/MANILA BAY-BICOL OPERATIONS:

Zambales-Subic Bay - 29-31 Jan 1945
Mariveles-Corregidor - 13-18 Feb 1945

1 Star/OKINAWA GUNTO OPERATION:

Assault and Occupation of Okinawa Gunto - 26 Mar-22 Jun 1945

1 Star/KOREA, SUMMER-FALL 1953 - 9 May-27 Jul 1953

LIST OF COMMANDING OFFICERS

Commander Raymond S. Lamb, USN:	21 Sep 1943 - 1 Sep 1944
Commander Benedict J. Semmes, Jr., USN:	1 Sep 1944 - 22 Aug 1945
Commander Charles T. Mauro, Jr., USN:	22 Aug 1945 - 20 Dec 1945
Commander Alfred C. Edwards, USN:	26 Jan 1951 - 10 Oct 1952*
Commander George R. Warren, USN:	5 Oct 1952 - 19 Jul 1953*
Commander Michael P. Smith, USN:	19 Jul 1953 - 21 Oct 1955*
Commander Thomas E. Williamson, Jr., USN:	21 Oct 1955*- 5 Mar 1956
Commander James J. Reidy, Jr., USN:	5 Mar 1956 - 8 Jul 1958
Commander Alan Dougall, USN:	8 Jul 1958 - present

Commander James M. Mason, USN, is scheduled to relieve Commander Dougall in command in August 1960

* Reported and detached on board dates.

USS PICKING (DD 685)

ORIGINAL STATISTICS

LENGTH OVERALL:	376 feet, 6 inches
EXTREME BEAM:	39 feet, 8 inches
STANDARD DISPLACEMENT:	
Tons:	2050
Maximum Draft:	17 feet, 9 inches
NORMAL DISPLACEMENT:	
Tons:	2700
Mean Draft:	13 feet
ACCOMMODATIONS:	
Officers:	20
Enlisted:	299
DESIGNED SPEED:	
Knots:	37
ARMAMENT:	
Primary:	(5) 5-inch .38 caliber
Secondary:	(5) 40mm twin
	(7) 20mm
Torpedo Tubes:	(2) 21" quint
ASW:	(6) DCP
	(2) DCT

Compiled and stenciled 10 Jun 1960 (ks)